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Between routine and moral obligation:
Exploring family consumption, emotions and sustainable lifestyles

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Abstract: Consumption and production are crucial areas for reducing societies' impact on the climate and environment and this is also one of the United Nations' global goals for sustainable development. Despite that the risks of climate change and environmental degradation is well-known, lifestyle changes where it is needed have not reached sufficient scales. This study focuses on the emotional aspects of sustainable choices to highlight the ambiguousness of consumption. The purpose is to explore possibilities and barriers for sustainable consumption by investigating the family as one unit of consumption, as well as families' emotional orientation and reasoning about consumption and sustainability as a way of living. It does so by conducting interviews with six middle-class families in Gothenburg, Sweden, that to some extend try to make sustainable choices in everyday consumption. The results indicate that changing consumption patterns are intertwined with changing emotional attachments to consumption practices, re-negotiating relationships connected to these practices, and developing an emotional obligation to sustainability or environmentalism. Emotions also inform and express barriers to sustainable living, in that even the interested have to balance sustainable consumption with conventional consumption to manage everyday family life.

Keywords: sociology of emotions; sustainability; family; consumption; lifestyle.

Introduction

The consequences of climate change and environmental degradation is one of the greatest challenges for contemporary societies, and knowledge about the potential risks calls for social change. In the 1987 United Nations (UN) report *Our Common Future*, 'sustainable development' was introduced as a global political goal which entails a development that should meet the needs of today without compromising future generation's ability to meet their needs (WCED, 1987). Today this approach is incorporated in the *Agenda 2030* and the global goals for sustainable development (UN, 2019). Herein, one sub-goal is 'responsible consumption and production' where the aim is to decouple material footprint from economic growth to reduce the ecological and climate impact of consumption and production. The extraction of raw material tends to follow the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP), and this is a trend that has not yet been significantly broken,[1] which makes the consumption/production system a crucial area to focus on. The implementation of responsible consumption in the sustainable development discourse has historically emphasised the responsibility of individuals to change their lifestyles (among other things to avoid neglecting the consumer sovereignty principle of 'free choice') and the notion of 'consumer-power' to make markets sustainable (Soron, 2010; Sonneryd & Uggla, 2015; Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2011, p. 89-119; SEPA, 2005; Larsson, Andersson, Osbeck, 2010). However, individuals and families are subjects to several governance discourses, and households are for instance also encouraged to consume in order to sustain the economy. One focus of this study is how families navigate between ambiguous demands related to conventional consumption and sustainable consumption, and how sustainability challenges routinised sides of the middle-class family life. Consumption is today marked by a middle-class norm and following this can be a way of becoming citizens of the 'normal' society (Ekström &

[1] This does not include the effects of the, at the time of writing, ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Hjort, 2010; Larsson, 2014). Moreover, consumerism influence families' collective identity which helps its members navigate the consumption terrain.

Another target of this study is how emotions promote actions and choices. Knowledge about climate change, environmental degradation and its consequences are generally well-known, yet lifestyle changes have failed to emerge on the mainstream scale (Isenhour, 2010). Scholars of emotion emphasise that actions are not a question of knowledge and information *per se*, but rather that the knowledge has to be felt, and actions will depend on how emotions are managed (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Roeser, 2012). The phenomenon of climate change and environmental degradation evoke unpleasant emotions, both concerning potential consequences and the need for social change. Emotions are handled in relation to emotion norms which is derived from structural conditions and based on this: environmental issues can both be collectively avoided or motivate sustainable choices (Norgaard, 2006). Emotions orient people in social landscapes by marking past experiences and promoting future actions (Wettergren, 2019; Illouz, 2009), and therefore emotions have the potential to highlight the ambiguousness of consumption for families that tries to make sustainable choices. A focus on emotions furthermore contributes to the understanding of how a break with habituated routine can come about.

The purpose is to explore possibilities and barriers for sustainable consumption by investigating families' emotional orientation and reasoning about consumption and sustainability as a way of living. The research questions are:

> **(1)** What emotions are experienced and expressed by families as they reason about *(a)* conventional consumption and *(b)* sustainable consumption and lifestyles?
> **(2)** How are emotions motivating their actions?
> **(3)** How do emotions inform and express barriers to sustainable living?

The questions are tackled with a qualitative research design by conducting interviews with families living in the Swedish city Gothenburg and its environs. The participating families all try to make sustainable choices, although to different degrees. Sweden can be considered a relevant context for investigating sustainability in family life because the awareness about the potential risks of climate change is quite high, while at the same time, the high-income country has one of the biggest ecological footprints per capita in the world (WWF, 2019; SEPA, 2018) (note that a portion of the footprint is public and institutional consumption). The present study contributes to research about sustainable consumption and lifestyles by focusing on the emotional aspects of sustainable choices in the negotiations of family life. In facing climate change and environmental degradation it is crucial to investigate alternative ways of organising society and social life and scrutinising challenges of individual responsibility inherent in the sustainability approach. By studying the family, as one unit of consumption, this study looks at how families deal with some of these challenges and how they do so as part of intergenerational considerations.

Previous research

The previous research is presented based on three themes: (1) emotional orientation in the issues of climate change, (2) sustainability in the household, and (3) the family as a place of learning about nature and pro-environmental behaviour.

The first theme is emotional orientation in the issues of climate change. On this subject, Norgaard's (2006) ethnographic research in a Norwegian rural community indicates that climate change evokes emotions of fear and uncertainty about the future. The participants were aware of the potential risks from a changing climate and they were concerned, but these emotions were repetitively avoided, which led to denial, no lifestyle changes and no participation in protest. Norgaard explains these denials with arguing that climate change is challenging emotional norms and 'ontological security' which corresponds with a sense of optimism and having control and thereby people collectively engaged in strategies of emotion work that kept information about global warming on a distance (*see also* Graybill, 2013). Other studies have found that unpleasant emotions can be constructive if mediated with hope. Quantitative research on Swedish young and young adults concluded that hope for the future made it more likely to act sustainable (Ojala, 2010). Studying climate activists at the Conference of the Youth (COY) in Lima (2014) and Paris (2015) Kleres and Wettergren (2017) found that emotions intersect in different ways in the orientation of action. Fear was a motivator for action if it was mediated by hope, and hope was spurred by the trust in the own collective action. Thus, unpleasant emotions can be triggers for action if they are embraced, worked with and combined with other emotions.

The second theme is sustainability in the household. Common topics regarding research on this theme touch upon the awareness about sustainability and the willingness to change one's lifestyle, contra habits, as well as routines in household practices. While sustainability can be a common and popular discussion at the family kitchen table, changing habits tend to evoke frustration and avoidance (Halkier, 2001; Barbosa & Veloso, 2014). Paddock (2017) have argued that households are 'carried by practice,' although her results indicate that lifestyle changes were more likely to be successful when undertaken in relation to life-course transitions, such as the arrival of a child. These kinds of conclusions have been problematised by Burningham and Venn (2020) whose results points towards that life-course transitions are multiple and intersecting. They, for example, found that women who were about to become mothers not only were adjusting to parenthood but in some cases also to changes in one's job status, making lifestyle changes demanding. Another study on affluent families in the UK and India illustrates how families' collective identity was influenced by an ethic of responsible privilege (Boddy, Phoenix, Walker, Vennam & Austerberry, 2016). The narrative of privilege conveyed responsibility of the own middle-class position to act sustainable in comparison to less privileged and children. This moral sometimes collided with high carbon practices, such as owning and driving cars, which were seen as problematic but also essential for the comfort of family life. Commodities are charged with meaning and symbolism and this is also true for sustainable consumption. One study conducted in various forms of organic shops in Bengaluru, India, found how especially millets were understood as symbols of health and a popular grocery among the middle-class customers, despite that millets traditionally been seen as a 'cheap' grocery (Erler, Keck & Dittrich, 2020). In a case study conducted in Sweden, it was concluded that concerns for nature and environment were common motivators for changing one's lifestyles and consumption pattern. The researcher Isenhour (2010) additionally identified obstacles for deploying sustainable lifestyles in price structures, lack of time and social pressures of consumption. She argues that Sweden has been progressive in trying to educate and inform citizens about climate change, environmental degradation and sustainability, yet significant behaviour change has failed to emerge on the mainstream scale.

The third and final theme is the family as a place of learning about nature and pro-environmental behaviour. Based on the bulk of previous research indicating that spending time in nature increases the care for natural environments which furthermore spur pro-environmental

behaviour, D'Amore's (2016) study on American family nature clubs found that participation in the clubs both increased the time spent in nature and the feeling of belonging to the natural world (*see also* Martens, 2016). With a particular Nordic focus, Larsson, Andersson and Osbeck's (2010) literature review has explored how children influence pro-environmental family consumption. Among other things, it is argued that the progress of children's rights and the democratization of the family have made child-parent negotiations a common feature, although variations depend on the age of the children, class, how the family is structured and parental style. When it comes to pro-environmental behaviour children and parents seem to remind each other about matters as water and electricity usage, recycling and sustainable consumption in a form of mutual socialisation. The authors imply that children should be considered as mediators in family consumption; "who interpret and negotiate environmental discourses and practices in complex intergenerational learning processes" (Larsson, Andersson & Osbeck, 2010, p. 140). Although, parent's behaviour, actions and family norms still seem to highly influence children's tendency to act pro-environmental according to another study (Grønhøj & Thøgersen, 2012).

As presented, previous research has studied sustainable living and everyday consumption in family life. There are nonetheless authors of recent studies who underscore the need for more research in which explores negotiations around sustainable consumption within the family (Burningham and Venn, 2020). This current study contributes with research about sustainable consumption and lifestyles, set in a Swedish context, and with a focus on the emotional aspects of families' sustainable choices.

Theoretical framework

Emotions, action and practice

This study is pursuing an emotional sociological perspective following the radical approach on emotion and reason, as well as taking inspiration from 'Bourdieuan' practice theory. The reason to focus on emotions concerning consumption and lifestyle choices is to get a deeper understanding of motivations and hinders for actions, as well as grasping the ambiguity of consumption. A deliberate choice to change one's lifestyle or consumption pattern in favour of sustainability is likely to be derived from a concern about the state of the climate and environment. Of course, a person's consumption can be 'sustainable' without knowing it is, for instance, shopping second-hand for the price also contribute to extending the lifespan of products. Generally, material or ecological footprint is bigger for people with high-incomes. Nonetheless, a choice derived from concern about the climate and environment can be said to be based on the blend of knowledge about the phenomena and moral considerations of its risks which evokes emotions of worry (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Roeser, 2012). Emotions can in this way be understood as embodied thoughts. How emotions are converted to action, nevertheless, depends on social context, learned experience and available resources (Scheer, 2012; Norgaard, 2006). Seeking the social source of an emotion is beneficial to understand what emotions do (Barbalet, 1998, p. 8-28; Thoits, 1989), and therefore I will focus on the role of particular emotions, for instance, what anger, fear or hope do to social relationships and action.

The radical approach is coined by Barbalet (1998) and based on a critique of approaches that separate emotion and reason, with the notion that rationality also is felt. Emotions can be backgrounded or foregrounded (Wettergren, 2019; 2013, p. 19-27). 'Background emotions' are calm and quiet emotions, not consciously reflected upon, giving a background mood to specific tasks and practices; often generating a sense of confidence and certainty (Barbalet, 1998, p. 29-33). When being aware of emotions they can be referred to as 'foreground emotions' and these

emotions are objects for reflection and emotion work, *i.e.* controlling, adjusting or 'working with' the emotions with various strategies. Foreground emotions tend to be interwoven in normative standards on how, where, and by who they can be expressed (Hochschild, 1979). Feelings of rationality are thus often backgrounded emotions, mostly understood as moods, such as *trust* in vital actors and institutions or *loyalty* towards employing organisations (Barbalet, 1998, p. 54-61), although all emotions can be both backgrounded and foregrounded depending on situation and action. Emotions continually shift and discreetly transforms into other emotions in continuous 'emotional processes.' Conscious or unconscious emotional processes are part of communication and used as a means of exchange, where some emotions are obvious, others are more dubious (Wettergren, 2019; 2013, p. 19-27; Scheer, 2012).

Combining emotion theory with Bourdieu's practice theory is relevant for understanding the structural aspects of habituated actions. I will here mainly focus on the concepts 'practice' and 'habitus.' Practice is actions that can be intentional or deliberate, though commonly, practice refers to habituated un-reflected actions (Scheer, 2012). Practice is organised activities of action, formed by different units of behaviour, such as skills, routines or general movements of the body (Bourdieu, [1977] 2017, p. 16-22). The habitus is what organises practice and is easiest understood if thinking of mind and body as one unit. The habitus is internalised structures which forms a system of dispositions, informing a person on what is appropriate to do in certain situations and settings (Bourdieu, [1977] 2017, p. 72-95; Moi, 1994; Scheer, 2012). The internalised structures derive from objective conditions and lived experiences from one's social position (*e.g.* class, gender, race, ethnicity). The dispositions are results of the outcomes of past practices, which further influence future practice: a 'practical sense' stored in the habitus. Emotions also follow a practical sense marked by social relations, in that: "[t]he habitus specifies what is "feelable" in a specific setting, [and] orient the mind/body in a certain direction […]" (Scheer, 2012, p. 205).

Habituated practices can hence be said to be promoted by background emotions, where actions and emotions are in harmony. The convergence of knowledge about consequences of climate change tends to elicit emotions that are more foregrounded, experienced as unpleasant and engages the person in emotions work and reflection (Norgaard, 2006; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). This opens up for the choice of changing one's lifestyle, though additionally the emotion work likely has to correspond with the habitus' practical sense in the orientation of action. Emotion work is practised with thoughts and related to emotion norms and draws upon people's resources and culturally available strategies of thinking in certain ways and thereby act thereafter (Norgaard, 2006; Hochschild, 1979).

Consumption and lifestyles

I distinguish between 'conventional consumption' and 'sustainable consumption.' Consumption is defined by Warde (2005, p. 137) as: "a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation […] of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not […]." This definition suits both conventional and sustainable consumption, though, within sustainable consumption the above practices have low material and climate impacts. There is no general agreement on *a* definition of sustainable consumption (Jackson, 2012; SEPA, 2005), though it is in this study understood as consumption that includes low carbon and ecological footprint, lifecycle thinking and consuming less in general or of certain products. This can be practised by contributing to the re-usage, repairing or sharing of commodities by, for instance, consuming used products, repairing clothes or technology or sharing tools or vehicles with others. Sustainable lifestyles can be seen as a way of living that centres ethics, politics and practices around the sustainment of climate and environment for future generations

and finding alternative ways of achieving prosperity, compared to how consumerism convey well-being and success (Cooper, Green, Burningham, Evans & Jackson, 2012; Alexander, 2015). Consumerism refers to the cultural values that reproduce consumer societies, and herein lifestyles centres around the idea of self-creation through consumption; a self that can be revised and updated at any time (Lodziak, 2000; Larsson, 2014). Illouz (2009) implies that emotion links people's needs and desires with the capitalist production system, in that consumerism encourage human imagination through emotional experiences. Commodities on markets are charged with stories, mainly via advertising, that communicates sensation and evokes emotions within consuming subjects. Nevertheless, most commonly consumption has more everyday sides that relates to accomplishments of routine tasks with concrete ends (Warde, 2005): buying food, going to work, shopping clothes, exercising, consuming television/entertainment, *etc*. In many ways, household consumption is "an adaptive response to present day living conditions" (Lodziak, 2000, p. 116).

Family

The family will be understood as a social institution and as a unit of consumption. Families organised in households tend to, a certain degree, pool individual income from labour and share consumption (Wallerstein, 2004, p. 32-37). This makes consumption an object of negotiation in the family, and especially if there are intentions to change consumption patterns and the way of living. The family as a social institution is formed by the discourse of family and by a 'family feeling' that integrate its members (Bourdieu, 1996). The family discourse conveys that the family is related to adult individuals that are connected by an alliance of partnership or marriage, who are raising biological or adopted children and together are organising households.[2] This discourse constructs a 'normative prescription' on how to properly *do* family life. Emotions are what makes the discourse a collective lived reality. By constituting members of the family as one unit, the members are engaged in producing long-term emotions of 'affective obligation', which Bourdieu calls: the family feeling. This is an example of how emotions have an integrating effect, in that, shared emotional energy has the function of producing moral solidarity within groups (Collins, 1990). The family feeling relates to obligations of love: love for one's partner, children, parents or siblings. Following Bourdieu (1996) the symbolic and practical work in family life transforms the obligation of love to dispositions of love, which generate devotion and solidarity, and to practices of assistance, kindness and exchanging of gifts. Consumption, particularly in the family, is intertwined with social relationships as a ritual for nurturing and negotiating relationships. Miller (1998, p. 1-23) argues that commodities, in this way, are a part of a 'material culture of love', which makes consumption an expression on how 'the shopper' relates to others and a way of manifesting love. The institutional role of the family is to educate its members on the proper culture and norms (Bourdieu, 1996). Sometimes this break from hegemonic ideas and the family then becomes a place where social change is negotiated and practised (Hill Collins, 1998; Wilette & Norgaard, 2016), as when trying to change the family's lifestyle.

Method

For this study to investigate family members emotional orientation and reasoning about sustainable living a qualitative study design was most applicable. The data material consists of five

[2] The family discourse can also convey more conservative family ideals which reproduce hierarchy (*see e.g.* Hill Collins, 1998).

couple interviews with ten parents and one group interview where two children accompanied the two parents. In other words, 14 interviewees were present on six interview occasions, totalling 467 minutes audio-recorded material. Interviews were chosen as a method to grasp the ambiguous character of emotions, to be able to observe how the participants act as well as to get rich descriptions of experiences (Gabriel & Ulus, 2015; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). The study takes inspiration from a methodological narrative approach, where it is held that human experience has a narrative dimension (Kleres, 2010; Damasio, 2001). When people talk about past experiences their memory is based on narrative segments, which builds a story that is anchored in emotional states.

Regarding the sampling, I initially tried getting in contact with families via associations, though this did not result in any responses. Therefore, I turned to convenience sampling via my close and extended social network which was more successful, and this is how all the participants were found. Out of the 14 interviewees, I have previously met four. In the request for participants, it was stated that I searched for at least two adults responsible for minimum one child, with the criterion that they to some extent were trying to consume and live sustainably. As mentioned above, sustainable consumption can be practised without knowing it is sustainable, for instance, people with low income tends to have smaller ecological footprints, but because this study is interested in lifestyle changes; being conscious about sustainable consumption matters. I believe it would have been ethically questionable to talk with low-income families about possibilities for sustainable lifestyles because conventional consumption is also connected to well-being and simplifications of everyday life (*e.g.* Miller, 2001). It should although be said that some of the participating families are struggling with the household economy. If only including work factors in the class concept,[3] the majority of participants can be said to have middle-class jobs (pending from lower to higher: *e.g.* technical coordinator, journalist, information engineer, *etc*), except two (waiter, student). Regarding gender, there were six women, six men and two girls participating. The youngest parent is 28 years old and the oldest is 50, while the participating children are nine and 12 years old. Four parents are born outside of Sweden in other European countries. All interviews were conducted in the families' households in Gothenburg and its environs, ranging from urban to rural geographical settings. Due to that the interviews were held in the families' households, I had to be mindful about entering their homes and safe-space with respect. Snowball sampling was initiated but was not successful for the timeframe of this project, and I stopped looking for more families when the restrictions for physical distancing got stricter in facing the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. All interviews were conducted before these stricter recommendations got implemented. The sampling described above forms a criterion-based sample (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 113-117), which is represented by middle-class families, living in the environs of Gothenburg, and are trying to consume and live sustainable, albeit to different degrees. The initial aim was to include more participating children in the interviews, however, in some recruited families the children were too young and in other cases it was not logistically possible for the parents.

This study follows the Swedish Research Council's (SRC) ethical principles for research (SRC, 2002). Beforehand, the participants were given a written document informing them of the purpose of the study and the voluntariness of participation. All interviewees have given their consent for participation and audio-recording. The children were participating with their parents at all times as one group interview with the family. Audio-recordings were stored on a hard-drive, locked away and only accessible for me. All names figuring in the analysis are made up to keep the participants anonymous.

[3] Based on Oesch (2006).

The interviews were held in the household to promote discussions on everyday life, and group interviews to capture discussions and negotiation between family members, as well as for me to get the opportunity to observe responses and collective emotion work (Gabriel & Ulus, 2015; Wettergren, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 153-155). The challenge with group interviews, particularly when the interviewees know each other, is that existing power relation will influence the dynamics of the conversations. For this study's purpose to talk about family consumption, group interviews seemed to have worked fine. The discussions had a good dynamic even when the participants disagreed, though of course, it has to be assumed that some aspects were left unsaid. The interviews were semi-structured, and the interview guide generally followed five themes, wherein four were related to sustainable living (*based on* Gothenburg City, 2016; Bolin & Larsson, 2014). These themes were 'everyday mobility', 'food', 'consumption' and 'leisure-time and vacation.' Additionally, I added the theme 'climate change and environmental degradation.' All themes were not equally processed because my aim was that the interviews would resemble a conversation as much as possible, letting the interviewees direct the focus of the discussion. The purpose of this was to avoid that I dictated the discussion too much and to facilitate in-depth descriptions. I still asked concrete questions about emotions in general and specific emotions based on previous research, as well as encouraging storytelling and to generally facilitate the discussion.

In starting up the interviews I asked if the interviewees could name a couple of things they associated with sustainable consumption and lifestyles, and I estimate that they know how it is generally understood and what practices it can include. The main focus in this study is nevertheless the motivations for actions, studying the practice directly would have required an ethnographic approach. There is furthermore a tendency that the participants want to put forward their best sides, and although I do believe that there were aspirations for this, 'actual' motivations were discussed between the participants. This furthermore created interesting emotional dynamics of pride and shame that could be used in the analysis.

The interviews were verbatim transcribed and most of the used quotes were translated from Swedish (one interview was made in English). Coding and analysis were an abductive and interwoven process with three cycles, where the aim was to find patterns. In the first cycle, I looked at what emotions that were named to collect how the participants were putting names on and how they parcelled emotional experiences (Scheer, 2012). Emotions are, nonetheless, not always articulated, therefore the second cycle was focused on emotional narratives with the purpose to grasp how emotions were communicated in the participant's descriptions. This was not a traditional narrative analysis, but rather I focused on how stories conveyed emotions based on Kleres (2010). The third cycle focused on emotional processes and emotion work, that is, how emotions shifted and how they were dealt with, both individually and collectively. Codes were grouped into themes and related to 'master' emotions, for example, worry was sorted as fear.

Qualitative research never strives for statistical inferences and generalisations, but instead aim for analytical generalisations (Halkier, 2011; Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Tracy, 2010). Rather than looking at the numeric size of the data material, the focus is directed towards whether substantial and meaningful claims can be made based on the data. Analytical generalisations can build on 'ideal typologies', which refers to ideal types of groups that share certain characteristics. The ideal type represented in this study is the criterion sample of middle-class families, living around the Gothenburg area, Sweden, and share a common interest in trying to consume and live sustainable. There is thus a potential for generalising substantial results to other middle-class families, living in or close to big cities in high-income countries, who are

trying to live sustainable. The problems related to generalisations in this study is that the participants were recruited with convenience sampling via my social network and there is hence a risk that the selection is biased. Furthermore, ideal types are merely simplifications of reality and thus all participants are not a perfect fit to the ideal type and it is likely that divergence from the identified pattern can be found. Another possibility for analytical generalisation is found in 'categorical-zooming.' where the focus is put on the role of single analytical categories (Halkier, 2011). The single categories in this study are particular emotions and what they do to social action. The particular interpretations of the category's characteristics derive from previous research and theory and are in this way aspiring for legitimisation.

Result & Analysis

The results will be presented in three parts. The first part deals with the participant's relation to conventional consumption, how one might get in contact with sustainable consumption and about getting conscious about the own consumption. The second part looks at how concerns about climate change and environmental degradation affect actions. The third part focus on how emotions connected to sustainable practices can mitigate unpleasant emotions related to climate change and how this relates to action. These three parts can be said to represent analytical examples of one's emotional orientation towards sustainable practices in the context of family life, and at the same time how one can encounter challenges. The three parts should not be seen as representing any real linear development.

The disruption of routine and tradition

As recently mentioned, this first part of the analysis presents the relation to conventional consumption, how one might get in contact with sustainable practices and how to potentially adapt to these. As we will see, a large part of the adaptation consists of changing one's emotional attachments to consumer products and services, which also entails changes and challenges to human relations, as human relations intertwine with consumption.

Love, anxiety & envy

The most prominent emotions orienting the participants in conventional consumption seems to be love, anxiety and envy. The dispositions of love and care derived from the family feeling can be manifested through consumption as a mean for nurturing relationships (Miller, 1998, p. 1-23; Bourdieu, 1996). For the parents in this study, this form of consumption and emotion practice is mostly directed towards the children. This could be manifested in buying something to the children from work, hoping that it will make them happy when coming home:

Sara:	Because I'm at work now, I might buy a book to take home to the kids or something like that. And I do… or a cuddly toy— even though they don't really need it.
Q:	How do you think when you're making that purchase?
Sara:	I think that they will be happy about it—
Anders:	Yeah—
Sara:	Then you often think that it might be really unnecessary, though I guess it means more that somebody gets happy for it.
Anders:	Especially the oldest - our daughter [5 years old] – often goes like: "have you bought anything for me today?" [said with a sweet voice.]
Sara:	Yeah, she does, she knows what we have at work. That we've children's books and cuddly toys and… yeah…
Q:	And does it usually feel unnecessary afterwards?

Sara: Yeah, you kind of think a little like *she didn't really need this thing, she already has a couple*… But I think it's partly for making them happy and partly because of the bad conscience I have for not being home. You want to compensate a little, for working [laughs].

Sara recently started working again after her parental leave and these types of purchases are linked to her bad consciousness for being away from home, despite that her partner Anders now is at home taking care of the children. Women tend to feel more conflicted than men between work and home due to gender ideology and norms (Hochschild, 1990). This is a conflict that can be handled by applying to strategies of action, which in this case involves consumption. Sara works as a store manager in a store that sells children's books and cuddly toys, so she has easy access to these kinds of commodities. The emotion work linked to the purchase is directed both inwards and outwards. Inwards by the aim of easing the guilt for being at work and outwards by making the children happy. Furthermore, the inward and outward emotional work interacts, in that, it is the feeling of the children's happiness that ease the own guilt. Another present inwards emotional process is shame about unnecessary consumption, which likely is aroused in the context of discussing sustainable consumption during the interview.

Parents' love and care for their children can be transformed to anxiety when reflecting upon the children's status in their social world (Miller, 1998, p. 23-35; Illouz, 2009), and this relates to thoughts about whether the children live up to the right expectations of their peers. This form of anxiety can be compensated through consumption, which becomes problematic in relation to ideas of sustainability:

Helena: It's not hard for us in any way, but for her [10-year-old daughter] it's hard, and for the kids in general. Just because they are so [politically/environmentally] conscious about things, they also get annoyed on classmates who say stuff and do stuff—
Peter: Who goes to Thailand every—
Helena: Goes to Thailand—
Peter: Every year, multiple times and…
Helena: So, it's probably a combination of envy—
Peter: Of course—
Helena: And consciousness.
Peter: They also want to go to Thailand.
Helena: Yeah.
Peter: We all want that.
Helena: But they also know that it destroys— [laughs] …destroys the planet, very much.
Peter: Yeah but it's really hard for them, and so when all the classmates go—
Helena: And they just shop, and shop, and shop, like. *You're supposed to have these brands on clothes and those shoes, and you're supposed to look like that*. Like, it's such incredible pressure on young people. With – I think – all goddamn apps and… not apps but… social media, Instagram and—
Peter: Even if we haven't directly—
Helena: Snapchat and—
Peter: Forbidden them, even if we would like to—
Helena: Yeah, we would like to protect—
Peter: The kids—
Helena: Protect the kids somehow.

Helena and Peter express anxiety and a desire to protect the children from social pressures and norms of consumption. Moreover, the children, and particularly the daughter who is in focus here, are politically conscious and engaged in discussions with classmates. In another part of the interview, it is mentioned that the daughter has been picked on, because of her willingness

to debate certain issues, and perhaps for violating norms of social interaction in the school setting (*e.g.* Norgaard, 2006).

As reflected in the quote above, political awareness is balanced against envy over also wanting to do what others do, such as going to Thailand on vacation. Envy when having the role of a background emotion is a fundamental mechanism in economic competition (Illouz, 2009; Barbalet, 1998, p. 54-61). Barbalet (1998, p. 106) defines envy as: "the emotional form of a desire for benefits which others are believed to possess." Illouz (2009) underscores the equality aspects of envy which point to the perception that one is being equal to the object of envy – the one who is envied – and therefore one desires to remove the reason for inequality in the relationship – the desired possession. In my material travels tend to be the main reason for envy. When the participants talk about travelling it is associated with optimistic emotional states, presented as adventures to distant places and associated with the escape of everyday life. Negative emotions, nonetheless, lurk in the background due to the climate impact of aviation. The object of envy is not only one's peers but also various role models, for young people this could relate to watching celebrities and influencers on social media. Envy intertwined with status-anxiety can in this way further spur social imitation (Illouz, 2009; *cf.* Bourdieu [1979] 1984).

Tradition, habituation and a break from 'business as usual'

Consumption is essentially a practice that is formed by habits and the adaptation to current living conditions. To break everyday manners in favour of lifestyle changes, one has to have experienced a series of events that catches the attention of awareness. This means a process of going from unconscious emotions supporting ongoing practices, to a disruption and a shift in focus, to eventually having to deal with the emotions that now are in awareness. In other words, background emotions move to foreground emotions and become a matter of conscious reflection and emotion work (Wettergren, 2013, p. 19-29). Such a break from 'business as usual' can be displayed in the extract below where Ulrika and Lars tell a story about a trip to London with a group of friends who made it a tradition to travel together. Abruptly one friend – who decided not to fly – let the others know that he was not coming because there was no suitable train option. Ulrika and Lars were startled:

> Ulrika: And then you [Lars] say: "yeah well, Glenn is not coming now", no, "because he doesn't fly." […] So, he [Glenn] was like: "no, sorry", like, "it's not possible." Still, that somebody takes that strong [decision]— *because of course he wanted to join*.
>
> Lars: Yeah. It was just… and this is a little bit what it's about, I think, how much you, yourself, are prepared to—
>
> Ulrika: Sacrifice—
>
> Lars: Abstain from, you know. But [laughs] in a way he becomes a social *freak* because of this, even in his own *family*. Because his wife and kids went to London the year before, and she felt like: "I want to show the kids London and they are in the right age." Then they went, and Glenn sat at home and said: "well, then you've to go yourselves. I'm not going." […] [S]omewhere we respected his principled approach, but we also thought that he was a *party pooper*. It was like: "*damn*, can't he… if he now has been eating vegan food for five years and doesn't buy any leather shoes and…" – then we thought – "then your footprint already is much smaller, then you can make one *flight,* can't you? You don't have to be so stubborn!" But no…

Glenn's 'stubbornness' caused a break in the travelling plans and for the friends to engage in emotion work. Both negative and positive emotions are present. On the one hand, they express

disappointment and frustration over Glenn's decision. On the other hand, when now reflecting upon this past event today, they are also impressed. Glenn is both *stubborn* and *strong*. These kinds of relational realisations of sustainable practices are quite common in my material, and the reflection upon one's habituated consumption practices as well as the break from these is elicited by negotiations with others from one's closest network.

The more routine side of conventional consumption, compared to traditions, relates to the accomplishments of everyday tasks (Warde, 2005), such as buying food. Ulrika and Lars from the quote above, continue discussing habits related to grocery shopping below. Consciousness about ideas of sustainable consumption involves realising that you are 'carried by practice' and this evokes a mild form of grief (*cf.* Paddock, 2017). It is here referred to as depressing:

> Ulrika: But just as you [Lars] said, we *quite easily* fall down to doing things as you were raised to do – I think it's very interesting. What is it that just make you [clicks fingers]? —
> Lars: It's depressing.
> Ulrika: *It is* depressing. And [laughs] the head is so imprinted by something— even if you… I mean— there's an endless number of things to choose from, but when you're in that stressful situations and everything should go *fast* or whatever and [clicks fingers]!
> Lars: Yes.
> Ulrika: Down to something [back to habits]! A strange thing. When we have time, we don't shop groceries like that, like you [Lars] said.
> Lars: No.
> Q: It's a habit?
> Ulrika: It's a habit, yes. It's the same thing choosing among brands [not just among goods] – it's the same thing – if you don't *think*. You just have to *think*!
> Lars: […] We say to each other that we should become that [conscious shoppers] and then when we go and do the weekly shopping, we come home and realise that: "now we've *still* bought a kilo minced *meat*", like, "it's good to have in the freezer."

A person's habitus embodies history as a 'second nature' and is often in the process forgotten as history (Scheer, 2012; Bourdieu, [1977] 2017, p. 72-95), unless the habitual practices as a result of the embodiment, is forced to awareness. As Ulrika said, it is easy ending up doing things as you were raised doing them. Lars describes the unconsciousness in habitual practices as almost being surprised about the minced meat that was in the shopping bag when they came home, as if lacking agency. With the time-pressures of everyday life, grocery shopping is stressful and to manage the stress one resorts to the emotional flow of familiarity stored in one's habitus. Furthermore, realising one's habits which fail to live up to the inherent expectations of sustainable and ethical consumption seems to evoke self-blame and shame if morally disapproving ("if you don't think. You just have to *think*!"). I will briefly return to shame further below in its relation to pride.

Climate change, environmental degradation & society's response

We have seen above that conventional consumption is embedded in social relationships, norms, traditions and habits. This next part will focus on how emotions connected to climate change and environmental degradation affect action. Based on the results, I cannot make any claims on whether getting in contact with sustainable practices or concerns about climate change comes first in attempts to change one's lifestyle. Motivations for sustainable consumption and lifestyles can though be found in emotions linked to these issues (*cf.* Isenhour, 2010). For Astrid (12 years old) and Agnes (9 years old) saving the planet is accomplished in the little things:

Agnes: Sometimes when I'm a little bit tired and want to go with the car, then: "no we have to—"
Astrid: Save the climate! [giggles]
Agnes: We have to be more environmental…
Astrid: Environmental-friendly?
Agnes: Yes. So, like, then we walk instead, and then I get more alert by walking.

Environmental-friendly practices come with other advantages, like becoming alert by walking instead of going with the car, as Agnes argues. Moreover, the above extract illustrates how the car is closely and 'naturally' intertwined in family activities (Sheller, 2004), yet by all means not given. For some parents in this study, the main reason for trying to act sustainable was motivated by being able to tell their children in the future how they responded to the challenges of climate change and the destruction of the environment: what did they do, and what was their attitude? Their narratives are about a willingness to be on the 'right side of history' when the consequences of our living catch up with us. This part will focus on what emotions the participants associate to climate change and environmental degradation. The most prominent emotions here are fear, despair, grief and anger. Action will depend on how these emotions are worked with.

Fear, despair and grief

Fear aroused by climate change and environmental degradation can be related to the potential impacts these issues will have on human life, as well as to the slowness or absence of political actions to reduce these impacts (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). When I asked Marion and Romain what emotions they connect to climate change, they answered:

Romain: For me, it would be fear [laughs slightly]. The change in society, the change in… for example, I grew up next to the sea, and with the sea levels rising… how's it going to be there [in the future]? […]
Marion: For me it's anxiety. […] Yeah… I don't know… I'm imaging so much, so many scenarios. […] I was saying to Romain, we're just about to understand what's happening, and I can't imagine how it will be for Benjamin [4-year-old son], or for my niece who's ten years old. It's horrible to think about how it will be when she's an adult.

Fear and anxiety relate to one another in that anxiety can be seen as a form of worry or fear (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). For both Marion and Romain their emotions are directed to an uncertain future and how society will be like, in particular for the children in the close family. Fear as a social emotion, according to Barbalet (1998, p. 151-161), tends to be future-oriented and based on a prospect or development of an event. When experiencing that nothing is done politically to face these potential dangers, fear and hopelessness grow stronger (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Fear can also be a reaction to present events that intertwine with the feared future:

Daniel: I've always liked the outdoors, for a very long time, and I like being out in nature. So, when you see that something you like very much is being *destroyed*… um… It's a hard feeling […] When something restful in an environment… outdoors… nature… become almost *stressful* instead. Because you see that what you like so much is being destroyed.
Emelie: Mm… I get sad… and I get worried about how… if it's just going to continue, like. How… I wrote an e-mail to the municipality recently about the road that I

> bicycle to work, because it feels like I'm bicycling through a pile of garbage, like [laughs]. It… is it supposed to be like that?

Fear is not mentioned in the quote above, but it is a fear narrative with rising dramatic action and the actors' lack of agency and powerlessness in handling the situation (Kleres, 2010). Daniel describes an event where he observes the environment he likes so much being destroyed by littering. Present-oriented fear tends to resemble panic (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017), and Daniel refers to stress which can be seen as a mild form of panic. Emelie is questioning if it is "supposed to be like that?" to the situation that makes her sad which can open up for emotion work and actions that serve to adjust the unwanted emotion (Norgaard, 2006; Hochschild, 1979), though these actions are depended on the mediation of energising co-emotions. Zofia is also articulating sadness in the extract below:

> Zofia: There're times when you bicycle to work along a busy road, you smile, and you feel really good. You feel: *the others are not moving in their cars, they—*
> Leon: They're not better off than us.
> Zofia: Exactly. […] There're times like those when you feel proud and happy or hopeful …sometimes. But… well maybe not hopeful, I'm kind of… yeah… not so hopeful about the future actually… mm… that makes me sad.

Zofia's emotional process in the quote seems to move from pride, happiness, brief hope, despair to sadness. Below I will return to how fear can be a trigger for action if mediated with other emotions, such as anger, hope and pride (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). Co-emotions to fear must energise confidence to promote action. Sadness as a mild form of grief, and despair, on the contrary, tends to generate uncertainty which has a negative effect on confidence and thus also on action (Barbalet, 1998, p. 82-94). These forms of emotional processes as in the quote above are quite common in the interviews, that when realising the 'big picture' and what needs to be done: hope vanishes. Hope is constantly disrupted by the urgency of the situation, and in effect decreases the level of confidence which is so crucial to action, as well as it decreases the trust in societal actors to handle these problems. It makes a possible better future un-imaginable. This is perhaps also where fear, despair and grief take over and to handle these emotions people can attend to strategies for keeping these emotions on "arm's length" (Norgaard, 2006, p. 391). One parent referred to this as the 'ostrich-strategy'; *i.e.* sticking the head in the sand and thinking about something else.

Anger

The distribution of guilt and blame is essential for transforming fear to anger because directing blame on someone or something constructs the object of anger (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017). In some cases, in the interviews, the distribution of guilt concerning climate change and environmental degradation is directed towards humanity as a whole or the self for not doing more, and anger is not aroused. In other cases, blame is put on politicians, transnational corporations and 'unsustainable others', which in effect evoke anger. At several occasions anger was directed against regional politicians for, on the one hand, having set up goals to increase the number of commuters with public transport and, on the other, recurrently raising the fares. This contradiction spurs anger because it disrupts one's efforts to commute sustainably, as expressed by Anders and Sara who live in a small town outside Gothenburg:

> Anders: It's very *stupid* when… when… or it's a contradiction when a country says that they [politicians] try to protect the environment and that they try to get more people to take public transport, for example, and then they make arrangements

that get the opposite effect. So… they can't expect that people will go *more* if they limit the number of busses to the city when people need to get to their jobs or schools. …or that they expect that you're going to buy more monthly tickets when they're raising the fares. It's *idio*tic!

Sara: It doesn't add up.

Anders: No. […] soon you'll save money taking the car.

The distribution of responsibility is clear, the politicians are making it more difficult for Anders and Sara to motivate public transport before the car. Anders and Sara's family are struggling with the household economy, so considerations of transport costs are critical. Moreover, anger in the interviews occurs concerning being fooled by green-washing, price structures, political passivity and contradictory decisions on all levels and in relations to others that are not willing to make personal sacrifice. Anger can be constructive, particularly if brought as energy to political action, but anger nonetheless requires the mediation of hope to be constructive: "[a]nger makes hope 'a strong energy' while hope makes anger 'positive'" (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017, p. 514).

Sustainability practices and lifestyle changes

If routine life has been disrupted, if the unpleasant emotions of the urgencies and consequences of climate change and environmental degradation agonise one's mind, how can this be emotionally worked with? For the participants in this study, as we will see, acting sustainably can mitigate unpleasant emotions. Some of the things the participants have done when it comes to lifestyle changes are for instance: eating less meat, becoming vegetarian or vegan, minimizing car usage, flying less or stop flying, reducing consumption of new commodities by shopping second-hand, spending time in local nature, engaging in community activities like for instance individual or collective trash picking, or engaging in politics and participating in demonstrations. At times, these sustainable practices are enjoyable and have other advantages, such as saving money, at other times it is an effort or even a sacrifice. Breaking norms of conventional consumption can furthermore upset others.

Receiving others' negative emotions

Earlier, I have mentioned that Helena and Peter's daughter got picked on for being environmental-political active, as well as how Ulrika and Lars with friends reacted towards Glenn's refusal to fly. In the extract below Marion and Romain talks about how both parents and friends got angry with them for becoming vegetarian and raising their son to be conscious about the process of meat production:

Marion: Thinking about Benjamin [4-year-old son], we wanted… we're vegetarians, and we didn't want to lie [to him]. So, when we see a *saucisson* [French dried sausage], we'll say to him that it's pig, and he understands that, but… for example his [Romain's] parents… they think we're brainwashing him. […]

Romain: Yeah, like, every few times we're talking about this they say: "you don't give him a *choice*, you're *forcing* him." […] Like my ex-best friend [laughs]. When I said to him… you know: "I'm becoming vegetarian", he was very upset about it. This, and the way we're raising Benjamin, we try to do things differently. This is some of the reasons we're not talking to each other anymore.

Marion and Romain are breaking traditions of eating which have made family members and friends angry. It can be argued that the couple is violating 'sacred objects' of 'moral solidarity' which causes others to direct 'righteous anger' against them. Collins (1990) claims that societies are held together by felt moral solidarity that is shared with others. This moral solidarity is

a form of positive emotional energy that includes information about what is right and wrong, and: "[i]ndividuals, who are full of emotional energy, feel like good persons; they feel righteous about what they are doing" (Collins, 1990, p. 33). If somebody violates the premises of the moral solidarity, positive emotional energy turns negative and transforms into righteous anger directed against the violator. Righteous anger is an intense emotion because it carries a sense of having the community's support. The feelings of righteousness are linked to certain symbolic rituals – ways of doing things – which becomes sacred objects of moral solidarity – a common sense. Eating is a cultural and sacred ritual and when someone questions the basic premises of the eating ritual, as eating meat, this person becomes a violator. Similar 'violations' can be found in sustainable consumption practices which defy the sacred objects of conventional consumption. Expressing anger against the 'violator' can be a way of reclaiming one's place and power over the other (Clark, 1990), stating that: "you are not better than me." Changing oneself can be met by others' resentment, yet this seems possible to overcome by having confidence in environmentalism and sustainability.

Pride, hope and confidence

In making unpleasant emotions constructive: pride, hope and confidence play important parts. Pride is similar to confidence which main function is to promote action. The difference is that confidence refers to expected behaviours in the future and pride refers to past behaviours (Barbalet, 1998, p. 84-87). Moreover, Scheff (2014) distinguish between 'false pride' and 'true pride.' False pride corresponds with egotism, such as a person being too proud to admit own wrongdoings. True pride, which I mainly refer to here, includes a favourable view of the self which is based on past events and has been earned. When being proud, you want to tell others about your efforts:

> Leon: We've already taken a few steps, like, we don't eat as much meat as we did before. We try to… I think… um… I would say I've become vegetarian. We very seldom buy meat and we don't have a car—
> Zofia: No car…
> Leon: We don't fly. Well, we try not to fly at least […].
> Zofia: If we'd fly, it would be farther away, and we'd stay for a longer time. […]
> Leon: So, we see the journey as part of the vacation, not just the destination… […]
> Zofia: You can count on one hand how many new things we've bought for Emma [8-month-old daughter]. Like, we really try to buy used clothes and toys and… yeah… really try as much as possible, of course, it doesn't work out all the time, but I think we're quite good at it.

Scheff (2014) implies that true pride signals a connectedness to a relationship, but I would argue it also signals trust and connectedness to a cause, which in this case is sustainability or environmentalism. Telling others about your efforts is a way of highlighting this connectedness. In this way, pride can be said to energise confidence and integrating people into an ideology or ethic. If not living up to the morals of the cause, shame easily arouses; when pride is lost, shame is evoked (Scheff, 2014). Pride can nonetheless mitigate unpleasant emotions related to climate and environmental issues when doing something constructive, which moreover can spur hope. This is something that Daniel reflects about in the extract below, concerning cleaning the local environment from garbage:

> I think this unpleasant feeling can be compensated by a positive feeling when having done something *good*. Like: *aargh, I can't relax here, or enjoy this place!* Then you *do something about it*, and it… in many ways, the solution is quite simple on the micro-level.

Hope relates to solutions, future improvements, and makes a better future imaginable. Confidence brings a possible future to the present and hope projects the self into the future (Kleres & Wettergren, 2017; Barbalet, 1998, p. 82-87). In this way, hope can ease fear and grief, as well as transforming anger, which furthermore promotes confidence and action. In the interviews, hope is often related to collective action, and in particular to the Fridays for Future movement with young activist Greta Thunberg as a role model. Just as Norgaard (2006) have described how a 'social organisation of denial' draws upon accessible cultural stories, perhaps alternative stories have the potential to generate strategies of emotion work that leads to action, though of course, these cultural resources need to be within reach for the habitus. The participants have the willingness to adapt their lifestyles, though, the big challenge in family life is to find the energy and time to act in different ways, and there are continuous negotiations on how much you can do and where to 'draw the line.'

Balance and boundaries

Finding the time and energy for lifestyle changes, engagement in politics and community activities is not an easy thing, because it intersects with everyday accomplishments in family life and work-life (Burningham & Venn, 2020), as discussed by Helena and Peter in the extract below:

> Helena: I've just joined the local board of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation because I met somebody who asked if I wanted to join, and then I was like: *I have the energy, I have the energy*. So, things are happening. You meet people who nudge you in different directions or maybe you nudge others in the right— or some direction. It… some days you're just totally exhausted and that has to do with everything else. With family life and… I think I would've been more… if I didn't have kids and had a different life situation I would've been much more engaged. […] Or?
>
> Peter: You yes. I don't know. I think I'm engaged because I have kids.
>
> Helena: Yeah, it's like that as well of course. But […] life is so mundane as it is—
>
> Peter: With economic pressure and so…
>
> Helena: That as well of course.
>
> Peter: It works very well in making you passive. That you have to… like—
>
> Helena: Work [laughs]. Take care of the kids and… cook and clean.

It is necessary to find the balance between doing something you believe in and finding the time for recovery, in-between routine tasks, as well as keeping the household economy intact. Getting involved in sustainability practices is facilitated by the own network, with people who can "nudge you in the right direction." In the final quote below, Ulrika reflects upon the importance of boundaries to ease the pressure on the children who very much wants to 'do the right thing':

> We've talked about— because there's a certain age here [the children's age], where there's so much you want to do *right* […], and [it can become] *too much*… because we've examples of that as well, when it becomes *too* radical in what you're supposed to do, right …as it should be. It can be inhumane to have that demand on yourself when you're young. Even— it's *ok* to not do everything right [laughs], but there's a lot of demands with everything you should achieve in different ways. And this, with sustainability, and being pro-environmental… to be a *good person* for the environment, it *can't* become a *demand*, it should be a *joyful lifestyle* because you believe it gives something back to you – just as you [Agnes (daughter)] said – what does it give back to you? Given that it actually gives something back… I feel it's a balancing act.

In times of social change emotion norms get more diffuse and contradictions between contending set of rules get highlighted. Hochschild (1979) emphasises that this can get people to change their ideological stance and start relying on alternative feeling rights and obligations. In this case, the alternative obligations have to be related to conventional expectations, because the demand of being "a good person for the environment" can become "inhumane" to have on you, particularly for children, and it is hence necessary to apply strategies of emotion work that balances efforts of sustainable living with current structural conditions. Ulrika's reflection further indicates how consumption and sustainable practices are negotiated in the family, and where the children are active negotiators (*cf.* Larsson, Andersson & Osbeck, 2010).

Concluding discussion

This study has investigated families' emotional orientation and reasoning about consumption and sustainability as a way of living, with the purpose to explore current possibilities and barriers for deploying sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption. It has done so, with an emotional sociological perspective on social action which holds that emotions navigate people through the social terrain and promote action. Based on the results, I argue that the most prominent emotions experienced and expressed in support of conventional consumption practices are love, anxiety and envy which are interwoven in negotiations of relationships with friends and family. Conventional consumption is also closely connected to habits and these habits can get acknowledged if encountering others in the close network who engage in sustainable practices (*cf.* Paddock, 2017; Burningham & Venn, 2020). Not surprisingly, concerns about climate change and environmental degradation also motivate changes in consumption patterns (*cf.* Isenhour, 2010). The most prominent emotions related to climate and environment issues are fear, despair, grief and anger. These emotions are more foregrounded and can be perceived as unpleasant which can open up for reflections and emotion work. As described by Norgaard (2006), these emotions might be avoided and lead to a social organisation of denial if not having strategies for handling the emotions, which I also have examples of in my study. However, like Kleres and Wettergren's (2017) research on activists, unpleasant emotions also function as motivators, though in this case not directly for social movement participation, but for middle-class families in trying to change their consumption patterns and lifestyles. This is facilitated by having developed confidence and emotional obligations to sustainability and environmentalism. When acting sustainably or talking about what sustainable practices that one engages in, it is rewarded by feeling proud because it signals a connectedness to the cause, which furthermore can spur hope. In short, changing consumption patterns are intertwined with changing emotional attachments to consumption practices and re-negotiating relationships connected to these, as well as to develop an emotional and moral obligation to sustainability or environmentalism. Within the engaged family, there is a possibility that discussions, negotiations and reminders about sustainable practices become a process of learning and adaptation between generations; where new ways of doing things have the potential to become new routines, traditions and form a new practical sense.

Barriers for sustainable living to become mainstream can be found in that conventional consumption is linked to practices that have been formed as adjustments to current living conditions. Sustainability does not imprint the function of dominating institutions and there are few incitements for market actors to, for instance, engage in the re-using, repairing and sharing of goods (*e.g.* Jackson, 2012; Lodziak, 2000). This makes the threshold high for transforming to sustainable lifestyles. Emotions here inform and express obstacles to sustainable living, in that

even the interested have to balance sustainable lifestyles with conventional consumption in strategic emotion work to manage the demands of everyday family life, even in relatively resource strong families that I have focused on. However, when struggling with the household economy, as some of the families did, the priority becomes price of the product rather than moral sustainability considerations.

This study has contributed to research about sustainable consumption and lifestyles by focussing on the emotional aspects of families' sustainable choices. There are nevertheless still much to explore in this theme that I have not been able to include. The most crucial question is: how do social context in-depth influence emotion work so it makes knowledge about climate change feelable and thus promotes sustainable lifestyles? And how do the social context influence avoidance behaviour and obstacles? I believe that a fruitful approach to these questions would be to conduct comparative studies with the focus on social stratification and cultural profiles (counter-/subculture) on both interested and non-interested in environmentalism (*e.g.* Skogen, 1999). Related to this I consider that Bourdieu's 'capital forms' could help explain how cultural resources forms dispositions and strategies of emotion work of sustainable practices. The previous research is quite clear about that women tend to be more concerned about climate and environmental issues than men, but I have not found direct gender differences concerning worry. It may nevertheless be interesting for future research to explore how gender and emotion norms make women and men express these emotions differently. Another approach could be to focus on gendered consumption practices in the family and investigate how they might differ concerning sustainability. Finally, I would argue that for lifestyle changes and sustainable consumption to reach the mainstream scale it has to be facilitated by political projects that help reshape social institutions. However, such interventions would need broad citizen support for it to be socially sustainable. It is therefore relevant to continue to study motivations for pro-environmental behaviour, sources of resistance against sustainability and environmentalism, as well as economic and structural hinders for sustainable consumption.

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